

REMARKS

The Examiner rejected claims 25, 30 and 31 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Shtarkman (U.S. Patent No. 5,445,876; Col. 3, lines 48-67). Amended claim 25 is representative of the present invention and discloses:

“A desiccant, comprising material including, at least in part, solid particles of one or more water-absorbing materials, at least one of such water-absorbing materials having an average particle size in a range of 0.001 to less than 0.1 micrometers to provide a high rate of water absorption and to provide an equilibrium minimum humidity level lower than 2500 ppm, a humidity level to which a highly moisture sensitive electronic device is sensitive within a sealed enclosure.”

Shtarkman teaches the use of silica as a dispersant. While Shtarkman mentions in the specification that silica gel is commonly used as a desiccant, a fact disclosed in the present invention, Shtarkman does not disclose the relationship between particle size and ability to reduce moisture content in the air as featured in the present invention.

Further, the Examiner claims that the particle size disclosed in the Shtarkman is capable of maintaining a moisture absorption rate and providing a decrease humidity level of less than 100 ppm when the starting humidity level is near or less than 100 ppm. Applicants can find no such statement in the disclosure of Shtarkman. Shtarkman does not use the silica gel as a desiccant, rather the silica gel is used as a dispersant. Consequently, Shtarkman makes no disclosure about the relationship between particle size and providing an equilibrium humidity level less than 2500 ppm.

Claim 25 has been amended to clearly specify the claimed material is capable of maintaining equilibrium humidity level less than 2500 ppm. It is believed that the claim as previously written was clear, and this was the intention, so this change is only formal in nature and does not affect the scope of the claim. Claim 30 has been cancelled. Amended, independent claim 25 is believed to be unanticipated by Shtarkam and consequently the dependent claim 31 is believed to be unanticipated.

The Examiner rejected claims 25, 26, 28-32, and 35 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Belding et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,685,897) in view of Shtarkman (U.S. Patent No. 5,445,876).

Belding et al. (hereinafter "Belding") discloses a desiccant paper made up of desiccant that can be silica gel, zeolite, or halogen salts. Belding does not disclose the average particle size in a range from 0.001 to less than 0.1 microns. Shtarkman is discussed above. The Examiner stated that the present invention would be obvious based upon the teachings of Belding, in view of Shtarkman.

It is respectfully submitted that independent claim 25 would not be obvious because there is no motivation to combine the two references. Belding teaches the use of desiccant to remove moisture and heat from air currents, specifically in the application of heat exchange wheels. Shtarkman teaches that silica powder can be used as a dispersant in a rheological fluid that is responsive to a magnetic field. Neither of the references address the problems of the present invention. The Applicants fail to see any motivation to combine the two references to produce a desiccant of an average particle size in a range from 0.001 to less than 0.1 microns that is capable of maintaining equilibrium humidity level less than 2500 ppm necessary for highly sensitive electronic devices.

Amended, independent claim 25 is believed to set forth unobvious subject matter and consequently the dependent claims 26, 28, 29, 31, and 35 are believed to be unanticipated and should be allowed along with amended claim 25.

The Examiner rejected claim 33 under 35 U.S.C §103(a) as being unpatentable over Belding, in view of Shtarkman as applied to claim 26, and further in view of Levinson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,384,357).

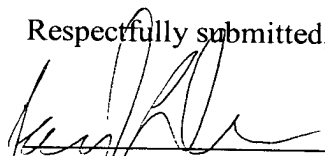
The Examiner is correct when he states that Levinson et al disclose radiation curable silicone binders, never the less, Levinson has nothing to do with using solid water absorbing particles in the size range of 0.001 to less than 0.1 micrometers, nor would there be any motivation for them to use such particle sizes. In any event, since amended claim 25 is believed to contain allowable subject matter all of the claims which depend upon amended claim 25 including claim 33 should now be allowable.

Claims 1-24 were indicated to be allowable.

It is believed that these changes now make the claims clear and definite and, if there are any problems with these changes, Applicants' attorney would appreciate a telephone call.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed none of the references, taken singly or in combination, disclose the claimed invention. Accordingly, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance, the notice of which is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raymond L. Owens', written over a horizontal line.

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